

# Illicit Discharges

Fact Sheet



## What Are Illicit Discharges?

Illicit discharges are any non-stormwater discharges to the storm drain system that are prohibited under local, State, or federal law. Stormwater is excess water from rainfall that does not soak into the ground, instead flowing to local waterways through the storm drain system. Illicit discharges occur when liquids or materials are dumped, spilled, poured, sprayed, or leaked onto outdoor surfaces, where they can enter the storm drain system and be washed into creeks and ravines by rain or irrigation water.

## Why Are They A Problem?

Illicit discharges are a source of pollution in our local creeks and rivers because they can contain pollutants such as bacteria and viruses, metals, pesticides, sediment, nutrients, and trash.

## What Are Some Examples?

- Pet waste left on the sidewalk or lawn
- Excess irrigation water leaving landscaped areas
- Overuse of pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers
- Oil dripping from a leaky car
- Car wash water draining into the street
- Leaking or overflowing trash dumpsters

## How Can I Help?

This brochure describes several ways to prevent illicit discharges. To report an illicit discharge or for more information, contact:

Public Services Department  
(916) 434-2450  
Public.Services@lincolncalifornia.gov



## Water Conservation

Conserving water both indoors and outdoors is important for our limited water supply. Minimizing outdoor water use will also help prevent illicit discharges.

### Learn More

Visit: [www.bewaterSMART.info](http://www.bewaterSMART.info)



## Home Car Washing

- Commercial car washes are the best places to wash your car since these facilities collect, treat, and/or appropriately dispose of wash water.
- When washing a car at home, ensure that wash water flows to lawn, garden or gravel area and doesn't enter the street or storm drains. Minimize use of soaps/chemicals. Consider biodegradable alternatives.
- Reduce water use by using a bucket, sponge, and trigger nozzle. Wash your car early or late in the day.

## Organized Charity Car Washing

- Consider fundraising by selling commercial car wash coupons instead of hosting a car wash.
- If hosting a car wash, be aware of storm drain locations. Ensure that wash water flows into vegetated or gravel areas and does not enter the street or storm drains. As needed, use sand bags or berms to divert water.

### Take Action

Find a River-Friendly Partner for your next fundraiser car wash.  
Go to: <http://riverfriendlycarwash.org>



### Restaurants

- Keep all dumpsters closed and covered, and replace or fix dumpsters that leak.
- Ensure that cleaning supplies, chemicals, and cooking materials are properly sealed and stored.
- Never dump fats, oils, or grease down any drain. Regularly inspect/clean grease traps and interceptors.
- Sweep exterior areas instead of hosing them down. Do not clean floor mats outside.



### Mobile Businesses

Car washing services, carpet cleaners, street sweepers, pressure washers, and other service providers should:

- Ensure that wash water, debris, chemicals and cleaners are properly disposed. Locate the sanitary sewer clean out where wash water can be discharged.
- Minimize use of soaps/chemicals. Consider biodegradable alternatives.
- Promptly clean up any spills using dry methods, including vacuuming, sweeping, sawdust/kitty litter, and rags/paper towels.
- Inspect equipment to ensure it does not leak. Ensure chemical containers are sealed before and after use and during transportation.



### Commercial Property Managers

- Follow the practices listed under "Landscape Contractors & Home Gardeners."
- Keep exterior areas free of trash and debris. Empty trash receptacles regularly. Keep dumpsters closed and ensure they are not leaking.
- Sweep exterior areas instead of hosing them down, and avoid cleaning any equipment outside.



### Landscape Contractors & Home Gardeners

#### Irrigation and Gardening Tips

- Minimize water use, avoid daytime watering, and ensure that sprinklers are directed at landscaped areas, not pavement. Avoid watering prior to, during, or immediately after it rains, and when soil is already very wet.
- Apply 3-6" of mulch to help retain water in the soil. Use composting blades on mowers, and leave leaf litter in plant beds as mulch.
- Consider incorporating drought-resistant landscaping to conserve water. Installing grassy swales or rain gardens will provide natural places for stormwater and irrigation water to collect.

#### Learn More

Create a beautiful yard while conserving water and preventing pollution of our local creeks and ravines.

Go to: [www.ecolandscape.org/riverfriendly](http://www.ecolandscape.org/riverfriendly)

#### Pesticide, Herbicide & Fertilizer Use

- When needed, apply pesticides and fertilizers using recommended amounts and application methods, and avoid application when it is windy or before it rains. Avoid overwatering immediately after application.
- Use organic, slow-release fertilizers to prevent runoff of excess fertilizer.
- Where possible, practice integrated pest management (IPM) to control pests while minimizing risks to people and the environment.

#### Learn More

Learn about IPM for specific pest problems.

Go to: [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)